

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A device for detecting and identifying a plurality of different microorganisms present in a single sample comprising a porous body having a plurality of regions of differing pore sizes, each of the said plurality of regions being associated with a plurality of different chromogens specific to enzymes produced by microorganisms.
2. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the porous body comprises membranes impregnated with chromogens.
3. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 in which the porous body comprises a plurality of membranes having differing pore sizes.
4. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 3 wherein the pore sizes vary from 0.6 μ m to 3.5 μ m.
5. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 2 wherein the membranes are cellulose membranes.

6. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 2 in which the chromogens are specific to different enzymes.

7. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 2 in which the chromogens impart a characteristic color to different bacterial colonies.

8. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 2 wherein the chromogens comprise a chromogenic substrate selected from the group consisting of Indoxyl butyrate, Indoxyl glucoside, Esculin, Magenta glucoside, Red- β -glucuronide, 2-methoxy-4-(2-nitrovinyl) phenyl β -D-glucopyranoside (MNP-glc), 2-methoxy-4-(2-nitrovinyl) phenyl β -D-2-acetamido acetamido-2-deoxyglucopyranoside (MNP-glcNAc), 5-Bromo-4-Chloro-3-Indoxyl-beta-D-Glucuronide, Cyclohexylammonium Salt (X-Glc), and 5-Bromo-4-Chloro-3-indoyl-beta-D-Galactopyranoside (X-gal).

9. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the porous body further comprises a phosphate buffer.

10. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the porous body further comprises Isopropyl- β -D-thiogalactopyranoside.

11. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the porous body further comprises Mg²⁺ ions.

12. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 2 wherein the membranes are presented in a layered arrangement, with an uppermost layer comprising a sample application pad of a rapid adsorption pad impregnated with a phosphate buffer, subsequent regions are in the form of layers having pore sizes of 3.0 μ m, 1.2 μ m, 0.8 μ m and 0.6 μ m, respectively.

13. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 2 wherein the membranes are presented in a row and column arrangements, each row comprising a particular substrate and each column comprising a different membrane with a different corresponding pore size.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for detecting and identifying bacteria using a device comprising a porous body having a plurality of regions of differing pore size, said regions being associated with a plurality of different chromogens specific to enzymes produced by microorganisms, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

a) applying a solution containing bacteria to the porous body at a region having a largest pore size,

b) allowing the solution to wick through the porous body,

c) allowing the device to develop in an incubator set to a temperature of about 37°C, and

assessing the colors developed on the device in order to identify the bacteria present.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the porous body comprises membranes impregnated with chromogens.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the porous body comprises a plurality of membranes having differing pore sizes.
17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the pore sizes vary from 0.6 μ m to 3.5 μ m.
18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the membranes are cellulose membranes.
19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the chromogens are specific to different enzymes.
20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the chromogens impart a characteristic color to different bacterial colonies.